

# The Open Door

## From the Director



*Fr. Tom Doyle, C.S.C.  
Executive Director*

The food that we serve at Andre House is very good. As the volunteers prepare the evening meal we tell them, “If it’s not good enough for your table at home, it isn’t good enough for our guests.” The admonition is proven each night when the staff gathers around the evening leftovers for our own dinner. Why is the food so good?

Somewhere in my childhood, I was captivated by the folk story “Stone Soup”. The fable describes a small group of travelers who arrive in a village with nothing but an empty cooking pot. The villagers, skeptical of beggars, are told by the travelers that they possess a magic stone that makes extraordinary soup. The travelers fill their pot with water on a fire in the town center, and ceremoniously, add their magic stone. As the water and stone come to a boil, the travelers taste their soup and proclaim it almost complete. With the addition of just a little bit of potato, the soup would be perfect. A curious villager goes to her home and offers a potato for the magical soup. The subsequent tastings by the travelers call for just a little bit of one more ingredient, carrots . . . cabbage . . . onion . . . salt; each time being provided by a different villager from her meager pantry. Alas, the soup is complete and the whole community comes together to share in the best soup they have ever tasted. And they are convinced the travelers possess a magic stone.

The miracle in the Stone Soup fable is made incarnate every evening at Andre House. A whole community contributes a portion of ingredients; the result is a delightful meal beyond what any one of us could produce. Your divinely inspired generosity fills our pots and our hearts each day. This year we have served 186,000 meals of very good food. Our meals are good because you are part of our spirit and sauce. We thank you for allowing us to be guests in your village and pray God’s Christmas blessing for your gifts of hospitality.

Peace,

Fr. Tom



## Andre House Reflection

*By Fr. Chris Letikirich, CSC*



Please let me take this opportunity to introduce myself to you dear friends and supporters of Andre House. My name is Chris Letikirich, CSC, 35. I am a Holy Cross priest from North-Central Kenya a Samburu by tribe. I

come from a large family of eight, four boys and four girls. I was ordained into the order of priesthood on September 19, 2010.

I join the core team here at Andre House after having served as the Director of Holy Cross Family Ministries in East Africa. An experience that prepared me for this wonderful ministry that serves God in the poor and the homeless of the Phoenix area.

In October, I reported to my new assignment at André House; which provides ministry to the homeless and poor populations of the Phoenix area. We offer the following services: laundry, showers, clothing, blankets, lockers, meal service, transitional house, legal services, and the office where we supply toiletry kits, phone calls, and basic first aid. These services are available to hundreds of people six days a week.

André House was founded by two Holy Cross Priests in 1984, combining elements of the Catholic Worker movement with the charism of the Congregation of Holy Cross. The Executive Director together with a team of competent staff and hundreds of volunteers dedicate themselves to serving

Jesus through others, as challenged in the Gospel, *“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was ‘homeless and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.”* (Matthew 25:35-36)

I am deeply touched by the experiences that our guests go through on a daily basis and very pleased that there is a place of solace for them through the ministry of André House. Sometimes life can get very complicated when one suddenly experiences an unexpected life change like being left unemployed or fired. This can cause a lot of stress. In this time of stress, it is very natural to look at our flawed nature and project blame on ourselves, to others or even to society. As we all know, keeping pain inside can have debilitating influences on an individual. As a rule, most pain and suffering will eventually need to be dealt with, or else over time the pain will be such a burden on the person that it could lead to elements of depression and in extreme cases, fatalities.

Let me give some examples of the challenges of our guests: drug abuse, poverty, homelessness, loneliness, lack of health care, family issues, unemployment, mental illness, pain and suffering, to mention but a few. Our André House endeavor is to emphasize to our guests that God cares for them no matter what their situation and circumstance may be.

*Cont. on page 7*

## Andre House Reflection

*By Jessica Lubbering*



Dear friend,

My relationship with you is bittersweet. It is predicated upon something negative, or at the very least, jarring, happening in your life.

Once I learned your name and exchanged banal pleasantries about the weather with you, I was at a loss for words. How do I relate to someone who is in possibly one of the most vulnerable and difficult positions of their life when I have a warm bed to call my own, keys to a comfortable house, a fully stocked kitchen with a continuously replenishing supply of more food than I could consume, a job, family, security and a safety net to fall back on in hard times?

Beyond that, as far as our services go, I have to be firm, fair, and consistent, balancing the desire to make an exception for you, my friend, with the good of the other staff, volunteers, and community at large.

And, when you, my friend, are able to get housing, find a job, and are no longer in need of the services of Andre House, we must say good bye. It is good that you go and I'm thankful that you are in a better place, but it is sad to part ways with a friend.

Perhaps you don't know, my friend, the true blessing that your friendship has been in my life. Perhaps you don't know how much I care about you, so you don't think to say goodbye. Perhaps you are ready to move forward and to not look back on this bump in your road, ready to high tail it out of the zone as quickly as you can, no looking back.

To you, my friend, who allowed me to share in your journey, I say thank you. I am blessed to know you and am thankful that you have allowed me this opportunity to travel with you for a time down this road.

God bless you in all you do and wherever life leads you.  
Never forget how very much you are loved.

Love,  
An Andre House Core Staff Member



## Andre House Reflection

*By Megan McCormick*



“I’m sorry, there’s no room for you here,” says the innkeeper to Mary and Joseph as they enter into Bethlehem. “No, we cannot take you,” says another. Dejected, fatigued, and surely quite dirty, the two do not know what to do. They are at the end of their rope. Ultimately, Mary and Joseph decide to take refuge in an empty, abandoned manger, and Jesus, King of Heaven and Earth, enters the world in abject poverty. Jesus is homeless. Jesus is a transient, a refugee. He is without a house, in a land that is foreign to Mary and Joseph’s own homeland. Would you blame Mary and Joseph for not having had a bed for Jesus to sleep in at night? Would you blame Mary and Joseph for their filth and grime? Would you blame Mary and Joseph for their physical and psychological exhaustion upon just having completed a very long journey? Surely, Mary and Joseph could have planned in advance for their trip to Bethlehem. Surely, they could have left earlier, could they not? It’s not Jesus’s fault He had to be born in a manger. And it’s not the innkeepers’ fault they have no more room. So Mary and Joseph *must* be to blame for the Son of God’s entering the world as a sign and victim of poverty, right? Unless, of course, homelessness is not something for which an individual is responsible. Unless homelessness is not deserving of blame, at all.

If only we all actually had that mindset in reality, and each believed that a person experiencing chronic homelessness is not to blame for their present condition. Surely, we are all sorry that poverty exists in this world. We are all in some way sorry for the homeless. But there is a difference between *saying* we’re sorry and acting with remorse. The innkeepers said they were sorry that Mary and Joseph couldn’t stay the night, but they did not act with remorse over the fact that Mary and Joseph did not have a place to sleep, and that they would suffer. It is when we are truly sorry for the homeless, that we stop *saying* we’re sorry for their sufferings, we stop *blaming* them for their homelessness, and the act of remorse has begun.

Andre House is a hospitality center for the homeless and transient populations of Phoenix. We are the new innkeepers who don’t say we’re “sorry,” but instead, attempt to act with remorse for the conditions of poverty our guests must face on a daily basis. By providing dinners for our guests Saturday through Thursday; by offering services such as showers, laundry, and a clothing closet; and by being present for our guests as we sit as porters and act as gatekeepers in the Andre House parking lot, we intentionally put ourselves in the position of being and interacting with those whose lives most genuinely reflect the trials and tribulations of the Holy Family on that most blessed night that Jesus Christ was born.



*Merry Christmas to all!*

Shereese  
Eileen!!  
Margaret  
Mickay Jones Sr. Tom  
Megan  
Richard  
Maude Jennie  
Bro. Richard  
Alexis  
D. M.  
Becca  
Sheryl  
M. I. - Leticia, etc.  
Joy Menich

*Your friends at André House*

## Andre House Reflection *By Rebecca Taylor*



I have been at Andre House almost 16 months. When I first started, I thought how could I ever remember all the duties and nuances of each ministry? I especially dreaded

the foodbank and soupline, always fearing I would not get enough food from St. Mary's, or I would do something wrong that would jeopardize the meal service. Now I love going to the foodbank and I look forward most to running the meal service. I like to think I can handle the unexpected, which I have come to realize is more of the norm at André House. I know what it is like to be short during the summer months; I know what it is like to be overwhelmed during the Holiday's.

It is always difficult trying to share how special André House is to me as a core staff, especially to those who have never visited. But as the season of giving is approaching, I want to share with you what André House has given me over the last year. I must first start with community. It is truly a blessing to live in community, and not just any community, an intentional community of hospitality, gathered in service of people who are in need. There is always someone around to laugh with, or depending on what type of day it was, to comfort you. We set intentional time aside to reflect and share a meal together, for lunch and dinner each day. I love returning to the men's transitional house after the meal service each night, eating outside under a tent lined with Christmas lights, sharing our day with one another. Another

fun tradition in the community is First Friday's gatherings, where we celebrate mass together and share conversation and laughter over a nice meal. Conversations around a meal, especially one Br. Richard has prepare, to me, are always the best conversations. This intentional, thoughtful time often gets left behind in our fast paced lives, and I have been reminded how important it is.

The gift of prayer has also been shared with me throughout my time here and I have come to love and begin to understand the power and beauty of prayer. As I continue to acquaint myself with the sufferings of people experiencing homelessness in Phoenix, seeing daily the many symptoms and causes of this suffering, I sometime catch myself in a state of hopelessness. But in my growth here, I have realized yes, I need to recognize my limits, but in doing so lifting up the challenges and problems beyond my control. At times when you think you have nothing to give someone will ask for you to pray for them, and I think okay, that is something I can do. I can't elevate your chronic suffering, but I can love you and comfort you right now. There are also times when I find myself down and they share with me that I am loved, and that I have been included in their prayers and you remember once you look beyond yourself, there is someone there to lift you up.

In line with that, I have also learned that I have just as much to receive as I do give, from those at Andre House. Or as Fr. Tom O'Hara said at the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, "we come to learn from the very people we were taught to teach."

*Cont. on page 7*



## Andre House Reflection – cont. By Rebecca Taylor

Guests have brought me T-shirts, phone cases, sneakers, food; I was even offered a dog once. But what I have cherished most, were the intangible gifts they have given.

They have taught me how to be humble and accept the limitations of life, and to do so, by trusting in God. They have helped me recognize the good in the world, and the blessings we receive each and every day. They have also taught me about love and patience, and listening, and I must repeat, listening. I have realized how important being an open ear is. I am not a good listener, I am a talker, and those around probably know how poor of a listener I am when something does not interest me. Here I have been called out before, and rightfully so. I have been asked to slow down and just sit and listen. I have been told my words aren't helpful right now, but my ears are.

I still have much to learn and grow, but what all these gifts have left me to

believe is that we are in need of a revolution of love. All around us we see hatred and violence such as the recent the attacks in Paris, and the mass amounts of people fleeing their homes in the Middle East. We see a world filled with violence and fear, and how do we respond? It's a daunting, seemingly hopeless situation. But there is an answer; love is the only way to move beyond our limits, to fix the unfixable, to heal the broken.

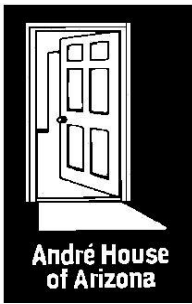
This holiday season I want it to be filled with love and generosity, and I would like to see this carried on through every season; through life. We see Christmas as a time to give, but let's think about what we are giving? Are we giving ourselves? Give yourself to your family. Give yourself to strangers. You can love someone without speaking to them; a smile goes a long way. Extend your usual bounds of hospitality.

## Andre House Reflection—cont. *By Fr. Chris Letikirich, CSC*

Through this ministry we try to heal, reconcile and comfort them by giving them a listening ear and a helping hand through the services that we provide. This ministry at André House is a strong example of living the Gospel values in one's daily life.

We each have a call, to help the poor and the homeless find comfort and peace in this life; true peace can only be achieved through a lifestyle that is modeled on the Cross of Jesus. As pilgrims on a journey to the heavenly

kingdom, we will suffer, we will struggle, we will fail and many times we will be successful. It is not hopeless for our hope anchors on the Cross of Jesus. The Lord calls us forth to be involved. André House relies on the generosity of countless volunteers and donors who truly make this ministry possible. Without your support and prayers, André House could not feed, clothe and shelter our brothers and sisters in their time of need. The question is how do you want to be involved in this great ministry?



## André House

PO Box 2014  
Phoenix, AZ 85001  
Phone: 602-252-9023 or 602-255-0580  
www.andrehouse.org

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# The Open Door



## The Arizona Charitable Tax Credit for Qualifying Organizations (Formally the AZ Working Poor Tax Credit)

\$200

Provides **160** homeless and low-income individuals an evening meal.

\$400

Provides an evening meal to **320** homeless or low-income individuals.

For those who live in Arizona, **André House is a qualifying charity for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit.** The benefit of Arizona Charitable Tax Credit is that the charity gets the money and the donor gets a dollar for dollar reduction of Arizona State tax. Take \$200 in full tax credit if you file individually, or \$400 if you file jointly.

It is easier than ever to take advantage of the **Arizona Charitable Tax Credit.** **The only requirement is to itemize your deductions on your tax return.** A baseline year of giving no longer applies. **If you itemize your deductions, your donation to André House qualifies for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit from the state.**

### THREE STEPS:

- 1. Donate Dollars** - Donate online at [www.andrehouse.org](http://www.andrehouse.org) or send your check made payable to Andre House to our mailing address: PO Box 2014, Phoenix AZ 85001-2014.
- 2. Receive Receipt** - You will receive a receipt and acknowledgement of your donation by mail.
- 3. File Form** - File your for a dollar-for-dollar tax credit using AZ Form 321 on your Arizona state taxes. Up to \$400 for a married couple or \$200 for a single filer will qualify.